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LB 870

requested where there was an application for a permit for a large animal confinement facility. This would only affect those Class III's and Class IV livestock waste control facilities. And when the application is complete, the department would issue a notice soliciting information on that application and any interested person within two weeks after the notice would have an opportunity to request a public hearing. There wouldn't automatically be a public hearing held, but in the event that there were concerns raised by someone in the community, it would offer the opportunity to have that public hearing. If a hearing would be requested, the hearing would be held in the area where the proposed control livestock facility is located so it's at the local level, easily attended by the residents of the local area, and is intended to give the opportunity for input by those folks who live in the immediate area who would be most directly impacted. The...after completion of the public hearing, the department would have 60 days to transmit its written findings and their reasons for the approval or disapproval of any license that would be part of that application process. The reason for this is because over and over again in the Natural Resources Committee and in the hearings that we've had around the state and here in Lincoln we have heard from the people in the rural areas that they would like to be able to have more input, not only to the local zoning authority, but they would like to have that input directly to DEQ. They would like DEQ to be able to be in their area listening to their concerns. I recognize full well that the current language of LB 870 does provide for a public comment period and that public comment period is one that I think is helpful. However, I do believe that it's limited and limited in the context that those comments are not necessarily part of a public record that would be held in a public hearing that would show certain deficiencies, certain problems, certain concerns that might be raised by the residents of the area that would be recorded in a public hearing. I think all of you probably received a description that's as good as any that I could give in an e-mail that came from Elaine Thoendel. And in that e-mail that you should have received today like I did it says, Dear Senators, I believe it was sent to all of us where she's supporting this amendment, says we should have some input at the state level as well as the county and local level. Public hearings give a public record and the community has the chance to hear how things will operate. I think that part of it